

SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study  
Monterey Park Meeting Summary  
May 28, 2009  
Monterey Park City Hall  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
Draft #2

## INTRODUCTION

On May 28, 2009, Caltrans held a community meeting to inform community stakeholders about the SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study. The meeting took place at the Monterey Park City Hall in Monterey Park, CA. Approximately 20 community members attended.

SR-710 Study Team members who attended included the following project management staff from Caltrans: Abdi Saghafi, SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study Project Manager; Maria Raptis, Public Information Officer; and Pratheep Piratheepan, Geotechnical Lead. Other Study Team members who participated in the meeting were: Yoga Chandran and Ayman Salama of CH2MHILL; Steve Klein of Jacobs Engineering; Bruce Shell of Earth Mechanics; Rebecca Barrantes and Glenda Silva of The Sierra Group (TSG); Rena Salcedo and Debbie Rusas of GCAP Services; and Katherine Padilla, John Limon and Thelma Herrera, of Katherine Padilla & Associates.

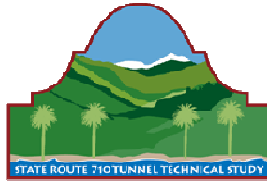
## MEETING FORMAT

The meeting began at 6:30 pm with an informal Open House. There were informational displays set up around the room that depicted a range of topics, including: The Study Background and Public Involvement Process; The Technical Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee, both of which provide Study oversight; research methodologies of The Exploration Program; examples of subsurface soil and rock samples that are being collected as part of the Study; and modern tunnel building techniques. The Open House format provided community members with the opportunity to ask questions and engage in one-on-one conversations with knowledgeable Study Team Members.

The Presentation portion of the meeting was convened at approximately 7:00 p.m.

The audience was welcomed by Mitchell Ing, Mayor of Monterey Park. Mayor Ing introduced Abdi Saghafi, SR-710 Tunnel Technical Study Project Manager.

Mr. Saghafi introduced Caltrans staff, as well as the Technical and Outreach Team members present. He then welcomed the elected officials attending this meeting. The elected official representatives in attendance in addition to Mayor Mitchell Ing were: Monica Aleman, representing Assemblymember Mike Eng; and Cesar Vega and Amy Ho, from the City of Monterey Park Public Works Department. Finally, he reviewed the purpose of the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.



The meeting was turned over to Rebecca Barrantes, who welcomed the audience and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. She reviewed the ground rules for conduct during the meeting, especially during the Question & Answer component and stressed the importance of two-way communication. Additionally, she stated that questions, answers and comments are the point where we really need to hear from the audience.

Steve Klein and Yoga Chandran, part of the Study Team's geotechnical experts, provided a PowerPoint presentation describing the Study Purpose and process. Mr. Klein's portion of the presentation covered tunnel design factors, geological factors and their influence on tunnels; and modern tunnel systems in Madrid, Shanghai, and Paris. Mr. Chandran's presentation covered status and updates on The Exploration Program that is currently underway to determine subsurface soil, rock and other geological conditions within the Study Area.

Following the geotechnical presentation, Ms. Barrantes provided an overview of the notification process implemented for this Study including door-to-door outreach to neighborhoods adjacent to the exploration sites. She also reviewed the public involvement process for the study indicating frequency and timeframe for Steering and Technical Advisory Committee meetings, community meetings, newsletters, presentations, and reports.

## COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

After the presentation, study team and community members participated in a Question & Answer session. Mayor Ing, Mr. Saghafi, and members of the Study Team listened, sometimes asking questions for clarification, and responded. Topics discussed included: tunnel site locations and the wide study area, potential sources of funding and highway use fees; geotechnical questions on boring and screening, tunnel completion estimates, other community concerns, outreach notifications and the need for public participation.

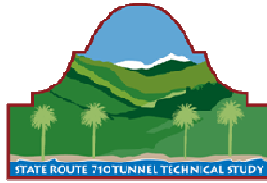
The questions and comments offered by community members are categorized and appear below. *Responses from Mayor Ing, Caltrans Project Manager, Saghafi and Study Team Members are indicated in italics.*

### Tunnel Site Location and Study Area:

- Would it be theoretically possible for a tunnel portal in the southern section to be built between I-60 freeway and I-10 freeway? Is it possible to reconfigure interchanges and start the southern portal between the I-60 and I-10 freeways?

*We are at the very early stages of this study. We have not even looked at where the portals will be, configuration of the portals, size of the tunnel, or length of the tunnel. We have focused on geotechnical and subsurface conditions in these zones and nothing more.*

*This mandate comes from several sources. First and foremost, it comes from the elected officials, specifically Congressman Schiff. As you know, he has provided some funding for this study, and his*



*condition of funds specifically is to be route neutral and that means looking at all possible alternatives. The other group that we get our mandates from is the communities that are affected. We receive guidance and advice from the Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee which are representatives of these communities.*

*If we do proceed to the environmental phase, all of these questions (i.e. “Can the portal be south of I-10?”, “Why don’t you put the portal where I-10 and SR-710 meet?”) will be answered.*

- Why is Zone 5 being considered as an alternative when we already have the I-10 freeway and I-60 freeway? This zone runs parallel to the I-10 freeway. It almost seems like it’s a no brainer.

*Again our mandate is conduct a route neutral study with no specific preference towards any particular area. From the very beginning, in order to connect a point to another location, we look at all the options. We are not studying alternatives, but options. As part of our evaluation process, all of these options will be narrowed down to one or two. If we proceed to the environmental phase, those one or two options will be further studied. Then we will look at all the other aspects such as traffic and air quality impacts. What are the traffic impacts to the surrounding freeways? What are the air quality levels? If the tunnel is built what will be the reduction of traffic on other freeways depending of traffic patterns? All of that will be answered in the next phase.*

- I thought the purpose of this tunnel was going to be to connect the SR-710 to the I-210. Why are you going so far afield?

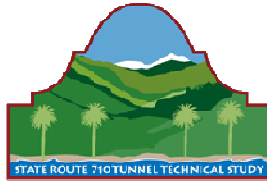
*We understand your concern as to why we are looking over such a broad area when extending the SR-710 to I-210 seems to be the most direct route. But this particular study we have not already decided which way this tunnel is going to go. We are trying very hard not to give the impression to anyone (elected officials, the public, communities) that we have already decided that it’s going to be from SR-710 to the I-210.*

- In the presentation it says that all practical options were being considered. Can you define “practical” in terms other than length and money?

*Practical from the standpoint of the technical study means to look at where the SR-710 freeway ends now and where you can practically extend from that point - West, North or East. So we have looked at the spectrum of where that could extend that from that point. That was our definition of the word, ‘practical’.*

#### **Potential Funding Sources:**

- As you made a presentation for the city council, you did talk about a public/private partnership. That, to me, means when there’s a private entity involved, obviously they are going to want a return on their investment. Was there ever a discussion on what that fee would be in order to use that fund because obviously there’s going to be trade off? I know we are early in this discussion, but for



those that have to pay a certain dollar amount I am curious if you can give us any details about that fee?

*We are not at that stage yet. We have not really been approached, by any particular entity wanting to fund the tunnel and what they want in return. A toll is a possibility if this project goes through the private/public partnership (PPP). I liken it to the 91 freeway toll road where there was a private entity that built it and they had a long-term lease on it. So that would be the likely scenario that will occur. We haven't really explored PPP but it's definitely a possible source of funding because of the magnitude of the project.*

#### **Borings:**

- A particular section of the presentation showing boring activities for various cities showed that no borings were made in San Marino. Why was that?

*If you look at my last slide of the presentation we eliminated a total of 8 borings because we were able to get good data from studies done by the EPA on the Superfund sites. There were a number of those sites studied that were done around the San Gabriel Basin by the Department of Water Resources. We were able to find quite a bit of information about the zone and we had enough information to move forward. That is why that table showed no borings done in San Marino.*

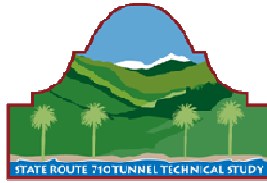
- You mentioned the word "screening". By who and when will the screening be conducted for the information that we have now? Will they use the 10 screening parameters that were given in earlier TAC and Steering Committee meetings?

*The technical team was asked by Caltrans and Metro to provide our interpretation of the subsurface conditions, the water conversion of the subsurface conditions between the zones. Regarding the screening criteria, 10 were presented to the Technical Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee, but we were only asked to look at 3 of the 10 criteria. These are related to subsurface conditions, which are the soil conditions, the groundwater conditions, and contamination. So those are the 3 parameters of the 10 that were asked by us of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee to study.*

#### **Outreach:**

- When you advertise this meeting, please do it on the city's cable station because we don't really have a local newspaper that can handle it. If you can put it on the city's cable station you'll actually get a better turn out.

*We did coordinate with the City to place the meeting information on the City's cable Channel 55 and the city's website as well.*



- We never saw the meeting advertised on the cable station. It should have been there this morning.

*We coordinated with them. We will have to check back with the City to see what might have happened. City did offer to put our meeting information on Channel 55. We will make sure that that happens in the future.*

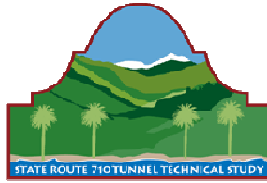
#### **Input from Other Communities:**

- I heard earlier in the lobby that you made a presentation to La Cañada Flintridge and Glendale and they shared some concerns. I'm curious to hear some of those concerns and how you addressed it.

*We are going to have the minutes of the La Cañada Flintridge and Glendale public meetings on the website very shortly. Their top concern is the impact to the freeways around their communities. For La Canada Flintridge the main concern is the I-210. They cited a draft report called the "710 Missing Link Report" which contains some numbers such as how many more cars will be added to I-210 and how many more trucks will be added if the SR-710 gap is closed. Since we are not doing traffic studies, and we are not doing any other studies, other than geotechnical and subsurface conditions, we really cannot answer traffic impact questions. The other question was, "Why are you even closing this gap?" That was one of the questions that kept popping up in both community meetings. We are looking for data and information to support this notion that this gap, as has been identified by SCAG and other agencies, is the most important gap that needs to be closed to complete the Southern California freeway system. La Cañada Flintridge is not convinced that there is enough information or a good enough reason to close the SR-710 gap, but we will be providing additional information. Again, the minutes of the two meetings will be posted on our website very shortly.*

#### **Other Comments**

- I see no justification for a public forum because the public forum is more concerned with the actual problem. You are just doing an investigation of what underground. Why do you need a public forum to do an investigation? Picking routes is what people are really concerned about. How you get to it is almost immaterial. They are going to be arguing about routes, not how you investigate.
- Response from another community member: Let me give you the Marine Corps response to something like that, with all due respect. In the Marine Corps we tell you, I'm going to tell you what I'm going to tell you, then I tell you, and then I tell you what I told you. And this is merely to let people know what's coming down the pike so that there are no surprises to anybody. Ultimately there will be the public hearings and so forth with more specificity, but right now we don't want any surprises, so let people organize and come up with their formulas, whatever they have. Their input, concern, and everything is thrown into the box so later on we can pull it out. So again, this is something extra.
- Response from original commenter: But you don't need a public forum to tell you what I'm going to tell you. Or tell us that you're going to tell us you're going to tell us. I guess this is maybe somehow, it's like, I hate to say it, but it's like saying we have to conduct business like we're dealing with some very foolish people. This is how we have to do things because after your investigation is done, which is



route neutral, it makes no sense to have a good understanding of what's here. I would suspect that if you were to talk to a bunch of geologists here in southern California, they would like to do an exhaustive test of the whole area. So when we need information it's available. So again, do the investigation, tell people you're doing an investigation and then all kinds of things are possible, but we haven't picked the route. So good. Tell them but you really don't need a public forum.

*Monterey Park may not feel that we need to come out, but there are other communities that will and do want to hear from us. If we don't do this, if we don't go through this process, we will hear from other communities.*

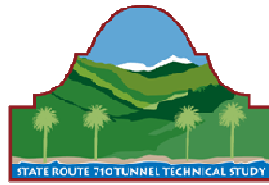
- This is not a question of trust, what this is about, what these people are saying, is that we really don't want it done so we're going to look into the whole business of the investigation because deep down we don't want it. At least not in our neighborhood. And you can do all the investigation and that's fine so long as you don't go into our area. That's what it really comes down to. The idea of doing the investigation, as I said, should not require a public forum. It makes good sense to do a thorough investigation. Then we can argue about where you want it and get the public involved. It's why are you picking these routes, not why are you investigating. Look, it's like saying if that's what the people want, have a public forum.

*We are civil servants and we serve at the pleasure of the public.*

- I think the reason why there were probably 5 zones is because it has been many years since the record of decision has been issued on the last environmental document that Caltrans did on the SR-710. I believe it was there, but it was challenged by another local agency and what happened is that during these many years, alternatives to a SR-710 alignment were proposed by various communities. I believe the reason why a route neutral study exists, which 5 geologic zones are being studied from Glendale to the I-605 freeway, is so that it can be shown that geologically (or at least through a preliminary study) Caltrans and Metro have done all they could to study every possible alignment from what I see as 180 degree angle of land on any possible freeway so that in the future the department will not say that we did not look at everything in terms of a freeway to connect up either to the I-210/I-605 or the 2. I think if people know what common sense was, that the shortest alignment between the San Bernardino freeway and the I-210 freeway is somewhere between South Pasadena and Pasadena. But let me tell you, I have been aware that in other cities many people have asked, "Why shouldn't this freeway go to Glendale?" It doesn't make sense to a lot of us who are citizens, but I believe that is why so many zones are being studied at this time. It is to show the public and the people who have been raising these questions over the years that Caltrans will do everything it can to study every alignment in this arc of land. We are still many years away. This geological study will finish in September, but there are still years of environmental work to be done. Then there are years of design and then there are years of land acquisition and years of construction. This project is a long time away from being implemented, even if the funding were all in place. It's indeterminate.

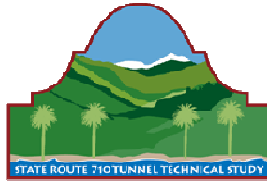
You know I would say there's no way that anything could be done, even if they were to race this project, in the next 7 to 10 years. Everything depends on how fast studies get done, the willingness





of the people to come up with funding, and all those kinds of aspects. It's the distribution of funds. There are a lot of needs in terms of transportation in this county and Metro and Caltrans will have to find ways to even get this (Study) done. This is just the first step of lots of steps to get going. I suspect we're several years away. Even if they start the project they'll be providing notification to all the communities. When you hear that you can expect that will run a lot of documents. It will take several years to complete. And then they can't even start design, formal final design, until after they have environmental documents. And a project of this magnitude let me tell you, is at least 3 years to 4 years in design and review because this is a very substantial project.

- Addressing the concern earlier about why are we even dealing with Zone 4 and 5 when the concern should be connecting from the I-10 up to the I-210. I would like to bring to your attention that if you have driven on Route 57 from Orange County North, it hits the 60 and then you piggyback on the 60 east for a little while and then you go north all the way and the same thing could be done here. So by exploring Zones 4 and 5 you have already done the geological, at least some of it. It's possible to piggyback on the SR-710, piggyback on the I-10 and somewhere east on the SR-710/I-10 interchange you can still go north and you have already done some of the studies.
- I know some of you may be aware of what Origin and Destination (O & D) studies. These were done more than 20 years ago. 50 years ago, we used to out there and stop and ask people, "Excuse me, where are you coming from and where are you going?" and we would document this. Later on we would start taking pictures or documenting license plates, and we had grids to determine where most of the traffic is coming from and where they want to go. You capture it here and then it ends up there, so they must have gone this way or this way, but nevertheless they want to go here. And that's what determines where the need for a traffic facility is going to be located. So all this was done many, many, many years ago. We found out that most of the traffic is starting at point A and wants to go to point B. Now it's just a matter of, "how do we get there." Do we go this way, this way, or straight ahead? So all of these O&D studies were done many, many years ago. Now we're trying to finalize them and come up with a purified form. So again, this has been done many years ago. And again, personally, it's good to know that these things are happening to see what's happening in the future. Rather than saying let's stop it, there's a need to be able to provide a travelling facility that is safe and also in a timely manner. And I won't discuss the impacts that may be adverse. Sometimes we have to inconvenience the few for the benefit of the majority.
- With regards to public participation, it is called transparency and this particular study has already issued a bunch of meeting notes, including 8 optional routes that were considered in order to come up with at least 3 of the zones. And then this 10 parameter screening chart, which included the criteria levels, of which only 3 were looked at and this was done by the same Steering committee, Technical Advisory Committee that is doing just the geology. So it gives you a forewarning of what is going to come. And we are also interested in #1; one person said there will be no interchange on Huntington Drive. For El Sereno that's very important. Second one "Well, you don't want to go over a 2% slope getting down to the tunnel level and getting up from the tunnel level." That means a long distance through El Sereno housing and through Pasadena housing.



#### **NEXT STEPS**

The meeting concluded at 8:13 pm. At the meeting conclusion, Rebecca Barrantes, Community Outreach Project Manager thanked the community of Monterey Park for their participation and assured them that they would be kept informed throughout the Study.